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How to Survive an Audit

- For GSFC Managers and Employees

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Knowledge of Governing Requirements

- **Understand the scope of the audit.**
- **Be familiar with the GPGs, PGs, and Work Instructions that apply to you.**
- **Review the ISO 9000 Standard sections that apply to your work (Mini-guides to ISO 9000 are available thru the ISO Project Office (62317) or Code 114 (69236 or 65756)).**

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Be Prepared

- Know the audit plan & when you may be involved.
- Expect auditors to ask questions about your job and the procedures you must follow.
- Ask group leader or supervisor for help.
- Ask other associates or support staff for help, such as making copies, etc.

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Be Prepared

- If given a choice of location, choose one that is operational and not undergoing set-up.
- Know the location of documents and records pertinent to the audit scope to assure timely retrieval during the audit.

Be Prepared

- Official versions of Goddard Procedures and Guidelines (GPGs), Procedures and Guidelines (PGs), Work Instructions (WIs), Handbooks and plans can be found at the Goddard Directives Management System (GDMS; <http://gdms.gsfc.nasa.gov/gdms>). Hard copies are okay to use only if they are the same version as found in GDMS. Some organizations may have installed icons on its computers that link directly into GDMS.
- Certain documents (e.g., work instructions) may not actually be in GDMS, but if they are a quality document, they must at least be referenced there!

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Typical Audit Questions

- What do you do?
 - Is there a written procedure that tells you how to do it (a particular task/process)?
 - Where can you find this procedure? (GDMS)
 - How do you know this is the current version of the procedure?
- What quality records pertain to your work?
 - Where do you keep them?

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Typical Audit Questions

- What is the GSFC quality policy?
 - With customer satisfaction as our primary goal:
 - GSFC is committed to meeting or exceeding our customer's requirements.
 - We achieve excellence in all our efforts
- Who is the GSFC ISO/QMS management representative? (Richard Day)
- Describe your process for (a particular task).

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Responding to Questions

- Listen to the auditor's question completely before answering.
- Don't try to guess what the auditor is looking for.
- Don't dodge questions. Answer directly.
- Don't try to hide information.
- Guide the auditor to the location he/she wishes to see.

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Responding to Questions

- Respond promptly but don't guess or pretend to know answers; if you don't know, say so, and tell the auditor you'll get the answer.
- Don't argue with or display anger with the auditor.
- Get the most knowledgeable person available relative to his/her area of expertise.

• • • **Responding to Questions**

- **Never cause deliberate delay.**
- **Do not volunteer information; wait to be asked. Unsolicited information may needlessly complicate the process and add time to complete the audit.**
- **Keep answers short and brief, but answer the question.**

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Responding to Questions

- If asked for a copy of a document, be sure and provide the current version as found in GDMS.
- Explain answers directly but don't give historical background of prior nonconformances unless asked.

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Acknowledge Nonconformances

- If the auditor finds a nonconformance, don't argue with the finding. But if you have good reason to believe that he/she has not examined all the facts, respectfully point those facts out.

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Definitions

- **Nonconformance**--failure to fulfill a specified ISO requirement.
- **Observation**--a documented statement obtained from investigation substantiated by factual evidence.

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Definitions

- **Finding--a statement of fact, concerning a real or potential nonconformance, made during an audit and substantiated by objective evidence.**
- **Concern--an observation that is not a nonconformance, but may develop into one if left in its current condition without taking any countermeasures.**

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Definitions

- **Systemic quality problem--characterized by a failure of a particular element of the quality system standard, which prevents one or more other elements of the quality system from conforming. The result is a systemic failure of the quality system.**

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Things to Keep in Mind

- The auditor is not a consultant! If he/she finds something that is not being done right, he/she will probably not bring it to your attention or try to solve the problem.
- Do not ask the auditor for advice!
- Some errors can be resolved during the audit; if appropriate, make an attempt to clarify what is acceptable so as to reach agreement and resolve the nonconformance.

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Things to Keep in Mind

- Nonconformances should be corrected when time permits before the closing meeting. Such initial action demonstrates your strong intention of complying with the audit results.
- Simple corrective actions can be completed during the audit.
- Any nonconformance that can be resolved during the audit will be noted by the auditor in the audit report.

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The Closing Meeting

- Be prompt.
- Be professional.
- Listen attentively.
- Question nonconformances that you don't understand.
- Provide additional information, if there is any, to the nonconformances.

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The Closing Meeting

- **Make a commitment to resolve nonconformances in the agreed-upon time frame.**
- **Do not be argumentative.**

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After the Closing Meeting

- A written response must be prepared. This will include a plan for correcting deficiencies.
- Continue reporting corrective action status until all deficiencies have been closed.